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ECONOMIC FACTS OF INTEREST TO THE FARM HOMEMAKER

A radio talk by Mary Rokahr, extension Economist, broadcast in the Home Demonstration program, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, February 6, 1935.

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You have listened to some fine ideas presented by Mrs. Thompson and Miss O'Brien that will help you with your clothing planning and buying. I am glad to tell you about economic facts that you can use as you plan your expenditures for other family needs, such as food, health, education, recreation, house furnishings, and equipment, savings, and community welfare. I surmise you would like to have answers to questions, such as:

What kind of an income can you anticipate in 1935?

Will prices be higher or lower for food, clothing and other things you have to buy?

Will it pay you to raise more on the farm for home use this year?

Is this a good year to fix up the house?

To answer these questions and many others, the United States Department of Agriculture collects information the year around, so you may make your plans based on facts. For instance, we know that in 1934 the gross income of farm families increased 19% over 1933, and 39% over that of 1932. Except in drouth areas we can anticipate having a little more cash in 1935 to fix up the house, and for some of the other items I just mentioned, that we have had to forego in recent years.

Five minutes is far too short a time in which to tell you all the facts, but I can offer you three publications that will give you these facts. They are: Miscellaneous Publication No. 215 - The Agricultural Outlook for 1935; 1935 Farm Family Living Outlook Charts; and The Consumers' Guide, a bi-monthly publication.

The question of how much we shall spend for food, clothing, medical care, education and recreation, is not answered in these publications, because each family must make its own decisions according to its needs. But, you will find facts as to how other farm families are dividing their expenditures which should help you with your planning. The total of goods furnished by the farm plus goods purchased varied in 1933, as reported by families in six States, from \$700 to \$1,200, with the percentage furnished by the farm varying from 17% to 52%. It is interesting to note that some farm families raised as much as 74% of the food they consumed and had to purchase only 36%. Economic facts show that the thrifty farm family should, during 1935, raise as large a percentage of its food as possible with special attention to meat products, since meat prices have already sky-rocketed.

Such economic information as I have cited is necessary background material to intelligent planning; but keeping farm and household accounts will give the individual family a set of economic facts that meets its

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individual needs.

A Maine homemaker said: "I use my records a dozen times a week. This fall when we were planning for the children's winter school outfits and wondering just how much they would cost, I looked at last year's account book and checked up on how much it cost then and figured out how much money we needed to allow this year."

An Oklahoma homemaker tells how she became conscious of the lack of reading material in her home. She compared the total of what she had been purchasing for physical development with that for education, recreation and mental development and found she was letting her family starve mentally though they were physically well. She said she might have had qualms of conscience if she had spent money for the higher things in life had she not seen the figures in black and white before her.

I cannot stop without saying that the best way to use these economic facts is through family councils where the family members, including the older boys and girls, pool their best judgment as to how the family shall run its business during the coming year.

Don't forget, if you are interested in economic facts bearing on farm family living, to write and ask your county extension agent or the United States Department of Agriculture for copies of Miscellaneous Publication No. 215 - The Agricultural Outlook for 1935; 1935 Farm Family Living Outlook Charts; and The Consumers' Guide.